Backstage

A SPECIAL NEWSLETTER – FOR SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

AF gets netted

Why not drop in on Steve Jarratt for a virtual cup of tea and a chat with FutureNet. Bring your own biccies though.

Welcome to another edition of *Backstage* – the newsletter which pampers exclusively to *Amiga Format*'s loyal subscribers.

One of the major events this month is the imminent appearance of Future Publishing's FutureNet – a World Wide Web service which can be reached at **http://www.futurenet.co.uk/** (http://www.futurenet.co.uk/computing/amigaformat.html for *Amiga Format*'s bit).

You can actually go on-line with Futurenet at the moment, but the service on offer is a little basic – although you'll see what it's all

You'll be able to send us messages and read *AF* reviews when FutureNet is up and running.

about. When Futurenet is up and running properly, you'll be able to read many of the reviews and features from Future's vast stable of computer, music and bike magazines.

As a WWW server, Futurenet is a hypertext-style system, which allows you to click on 'hot words' – highlighted text which then sends you to another part of the Web. For instance, if we put *Amiga Format*'s review of *Lightwave 3D* on-line, we might have highlighted the name NewTek. Clicking on NewTek could then (theoretically) send you directly to NewTek's Internet address, so you could leave your opinions, ask questions, download 3D models or whatever (depending on what NewTek have on-line, of course).

When Futurenet is up, running and operating at full speed, we will have pages from current issues of *AF* (possibly even before we've printed the magazine), with pictures and screenshots that you can download. You'll also be able to leave messages for us, ask questions and discuss the magazine. We also hope to post Coverdisk software, bug-fixes, demos and things that our measly 750K disks just can't cope with.
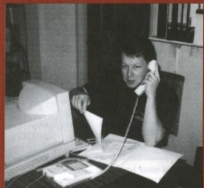
GETTING ON-LINE

Futurenet should be fully operational by the time you read this, so how do you go about joining in the fun?

First you should really think about getting a modem. Jacking into the Internet without a modem is particularly difficult – unless you're the Lawnmower Man or have a BT connection in the back of your head, you'll need a modem. And the faster the better: an expensive, fast modem now will mean shorter

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WHAT I DO
DALE BRADFORD
DIRECT SALES MANAGER

Dale Bradford is the latest recruit to the *AF* team. With his strong South Wales accent, we think he's a real caaaaaard.
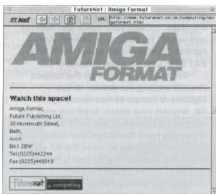
How did I come to be here? Well, the Amiga and I go back a long way: I remember horrifying my entire family back in 1986 when I came home with a collection of boxes from which emerged an Amiga 1000.

"Another computer?" They challenged, "Yes, but this one is different. Honest."

It was too. No other computer had ever tempted me to write a cheque for £1,200 before. This would have been a little more forgivable if I hadn't been running a computer shop at the time and already spending over eight hours a day trying to find an excuse to play with our demonstration Amiga. Still, what can you do when you fall in love...

My ST-owning friends stifled giggles on learning the price and on seeing the range of software available, but within months *Defender Of The Crown* was released and suddenly nothing else mattered. Everyone wanted an Amiga.

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← Over the next eight years, shops like mine sold hundreds of thousands of Amigas and helped make the UK the most densely populated country with Amiga owners in the world. Anyway here I am at the most popular Amiga magazine in the world. Obviously Commodore's finest moment and I were destined to spend our days together...

Oh, er, you don't really want to know what I do, do you? I've only got a paragraph left, gulp! Right, my duties include: sourcing packages for the Coverdisks (incidentally, if you have any views about the Coverdisks, please write to me, especially if you want to say what brilliant stuff we bring you); choosing interesting items for our mail order pages and, er, lots of other things too. Honest.

← log-on times and a cheaper phone bill in the long run. You should at least be looking at a V.32bis (14,400 baud) machine, or even the new generation of V-Fast (28,800 baud) modems. Jason Holborn recently put the Aceex 1414 (AF63, £170, Power Computing 01234 273000) through its paces and awarded it a Format Gold.

But even when you're all modemed up, getting on Internet isn't as easy as logging on to some of your local Bulletin Boards. To make the most of the Internet, you'll have to think about setting up your own site and getting your own Internet address.

The easiest way to go about it is to contact Demon Internet Services (0181 349 0063). For £12.50 they will set up your site and provide all the relevant software, which you simply download and configure. This includes AmiTCP which actually gives you access to the Internet, plus the browser software Amiga Mosaic v1.2 (needs Workbench 2.1 or above) which provides the interface, enabling you to make sense of the information superhighway.

After that it's £10 a month for the connection – no matter how much you use it – and your phone bill. Beware: some people have the notion the Internet is free: it ain't.

GAMES NEWS
Reasons to be cheerful, part one. Many blockheads are suggesting that the Amiga is on its last legs; that software companies are giving up on the format – a format where games outsell all consoles and PCs. Not so the case. Some of the Amiga's best games are on the way including the Sensible trilogy of

Soccer, Fodder 2 and Golf, Ocean's range of cart conversions and Psygnosis' latest Lemmings instalment. And there are many more.

OK, that's the feel-good piece out of the way for this month. News reaches us that Acclaim Entertainment (responsible for Mortal Kombat II) have joined forces with Warner Bros to create the special effects for the forthcoming movie Batman Forever. Using a technique known as Motion Capture technology, actor's movements are scanned and recorded, transferring their on-screen activities on to computer.

How so? Well, the scanned features are combined with a three-dimensional skeletal body-map and the results are incredible – the computerised figures look as realistic as the actors. None of the actors need to be involved in any of the special effects scenes making the whole process cost effective.

And the best thing is, all the effects are created on a standard A500 Plus. Er, actually that bit was a lie... *AF*

Write to Backstage
If there's anything you would like to see in Backstage or Amiga Format, write to:
Backstage,
Amiga Format,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, Avon BA1 2BW.

COMPETITION TIME
This month's compo is to win a copy of the excellent DTP package, PageSetter 3. This brilliant sequel to the AF63's Coverdisk program is currently on sale through Amiga Format at £39.99 (see page 18) but we've got three of them to give away to one of our lucky subscribers.

To win PageSetter 3, all you have to do is answer the following desktop publishing-related question:

How many points are there in an inch?

When you've got the answer, write it on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope, include your name and address and send it to: Backstage Compo, Amiga Format, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon BA1 2PW. Closing date: December 15.

Oh, and while we're on the subject, I'm still waiting for entries to the Lightwave compo of two issues ago. So far, anyone who enters anything wins the copy of Lightwave. If you were asleep when you read Backstage, the compo was to render your idea of what the AF office looks like, complete with desks, fixtures and people. The more unusual/funny/imaginative the better.

Don't worry, though, because if no-one enters, I'll have it.

Subscriber Superdisk

Jason Holborn has put together another fabulous collection of programs for your Superdisk

ON THIS MONTH'S DISK...

Pub Darts – A brilliant pub darts game. Smoke, spilt pints and peanuts not included.
SnoopDOS 3.0 – If you've encountered problems installing programs, then *SnoopDOS* is for you.
Button Menu – Create a menu for your favourite programs so loading them from the Workbench has never been so easy.
MouseEm – Is your mouse an ex-mouse? Is it

no longer of this world? With *MouseEm* installed, you can use your joystick instead.
CG Font – Add a touch of professionalism to your word processing and desktop publishing documents with this wonderful outline font.
OctaMED Tune – Got a copy of our *OctaMED 5* Coverdisk? Load this tune and discover the musical talents of your Amiga.
* Requires Workbench 2.0 or greater.

GETTING STARTED

You can access the programs and files on this month's Subscribers' Superdisk by inserting a copy of the Workbench disk into the internal drive of your Amiga and then switching on. Once Workbench has loaded, replace it with your Subscribers' Superdisk and a disk icon appears labelled SUBSDISK. Before you attempt to use any of the programs on the Superdisk, make a back-up of the disk using the procedure detailed in the Coverdisk pages in this month's issue of *Amiga Format*. Once you've made a back-up, store the original in a safe place and run all the programs from your copy.

PUB DARTS

We've had some pretty impressive games on our Subscribers' Superdisk over the last year and we've tried our best to cater for every gaming taste with a variety of shoot-em-ups, platform games, puzzles and so on. Our number one priority has always been to bring you games packed with playability. And with *Pub Darts*, we think we've struck gold.

Pub Darts is an Amiga implementation of that age-old pub favourite, darts. Unfortunately, we were unable to cram a pint of the landlord's best tipple and a half-eaten packet of peanuts on to our Subscribers' disk, so you'll have to provide these yourself.

Although *Pub Darts* can be played as a solo pursuit, the game really comes into its own when played against another person. There are two game options – the classic 501 or 301 games and the not so well known Football (don't worry, the rules for both games are explained in the documentation file). If you'd

like to polish up your prowess with the darts, you can also play a number of computer players in one of two pubs.

In order to play *Pub Darts*, the game's font files must be installed on to your Workbench disk. To do this, load up Workbench and enter the following line at a Shell prompt.
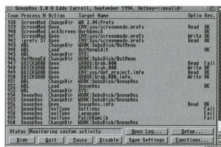
Copy SUBSDISK66:PubDarts/PDarts#? ALL Fonts:

SNOOPDOS 3.0

Installing programs on to a hard disk or even from one floppy disk to another can be quite confusing. After all, how are you supposed to know that the program you're trying to install needs access to some obscure library file that you've never heard of before? Use *SnoopDOS 3.0*, on the other hand, and you'll know in an instant what went wrong.

SnoopDOS 3.0 is the latest and by far the best release of Eddy Carroll's brilliantly useful utility. It enables you to monitor a variety of
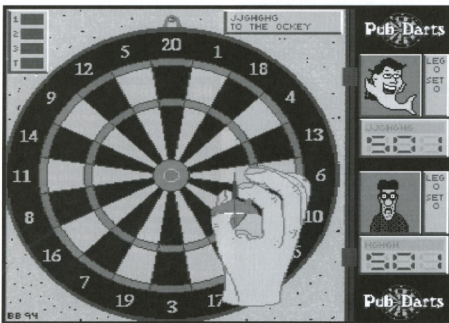

Do you want to know which files, libraries and fonts your programs are expecting to find? Then use *SnoopDOS*.

system operations carried out by programs including which files a program is attempting to open, which fonts, libraries, devices and environment variables it expects to find and so on. If a given program fails to find one of these resources (causing it not to load), *SnoopDOS* tells you what it expected to find and where it looked. All you have to do is to place the appropriate file into the directory that the program expects it to be and your installation problems are over.

This latest release of *SnoopDOS* is miles better than the previous release and light years ahead of any rivals. Programs of this type used to be difficult to use but Eddy has put a great deal of effort into ensuring that *SnoopDOS 3.0* is very easy. Boasting a new Workbench 2.0-compliant user interface, *SnoopDOS 3.0* is one utility your Amiga shouldn't be without.

SnoopDOS 3.0 is surprisingly simple to use. Just double-click on the *SnoopDOS 3.0* icon and a window appears on your Workbench screen. At first, this window is empty but when you attempt to load a program from the Workbench, each disk or library operation that the program attempts to perform is listed

Continued overleaf ➡

Give your family and friends a sound thrashing at darts without ever having to buy a round of drinks.

CG FONTS

Hawaii CGFont

Get tropical with the Hawaii CompuGraphic outline font you'll find on your Superdisk. Aloha. Or something.

This font can't actually be used with the *PageSetter 2* Coverdisk from *AF63* but it is still a very useful CompuGraphic outline font to have.

To install the Hawaii font first boot from your normal Workbench system disks and follow these three steps:

1 Run the Fountain (or Intellifont if you have an A1200 or an A4000) program in your System directory and insert the Subscribers' Superdisk in any drive.

2 Click on the gadget at the top right of the screen under Outline Font Source and then select SUBSDISK from the list of volumes. Now click on the CGfonts drawer and click on OK. The font on the Superdisk should then be shown in the Source Typefaces list.

3 Click once on the font (a + symbol appears next to it) and then click on Install Marked Typefaces. After a bit of disk swapping, the font is installed on to your Workbench disk.

You may find that there is not enough free space on your Workbench and so some of your files may have to be removed.

IMPORTANT: Don't forget to always work on a back-up of your Workbench disk.

← within the *SnoopDOS* window. *SnoopDOS* displays a number of important items of information on each operation it reports – which program attempted the operation, what the operation was (attempting to open a file, for example), which file or library the program attempted to access and (most importantly) whether the operation was successful or not.
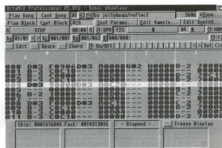
BUTTON MENU

There are plenty of utilities available that enable you to run programs from the Workbench without having to wade through the directory structure of your hard disk – *AppMenu* and *ToolsDaemon* being just two. These work by appending additional menu items to the Workbench Tools pull-down menu which is great if you like messing around with pull-down menus, but not so good if your mouse is a little dodgy (there's nothing more annoying than accidentally loading the wrong program).

Button Menu is another launch pad utility but it doesn't use the pull-down menus. Instead, *Button Menu* allows you to create menus (yes, you can have more than one) in the form of Workbench windows full of gadgets, each of which can be set up to run a particular program when you click on them.

Two programs are provided (although you can only see one from the Workbench) – *ButMenuEdit* (the button menu editor utility) and *BMX* (a Shell-based utility that displays your buttons). Once you've defined your buttons with the Button Editor utility, you then simply add a line to your Startup-Sequence and your Workbench menu window appears each time you boot up your Amiga.

Button Menu is quite a complex program to use so it's well worth taking the time to read the documentation file that comes with it thoroughly. Better still, print it out. One last thing – before the *Button Menu* editor utility (*ButMenuEdit*) will run, you need to install the Reqtools library on to your Workbench disk.

Treat your ears to a musical feast with this month's *OctaMED* tune.

Load up Workbench and enter the following line at a Shell prompt.

`Copy SUBSDISK66:ButMenu/Libs/reqtools.library LIBS:`

MOUSEEM

If there's one thing that is worse than a dodgy mouse, it's a dead mouse. Not only will you have to face the depressing fact that you're going to have to shell out some of your hard-earned cash on a new mouse, but the lack of a working mouse controller does render the Amiga's Workbench – and indeed most serious applications – rather useless.

MouseEm provides a temporary solution to this problem by allowing you to use your joystick to move the mouse pointer around the screen. Simply run this program, connect a joystick to control port 1 and the mouse pointer should move in response to joystick control. You can select icons too simply by pressing the fire button.

Unfortunately, *MouseEm* doesn't enable you to access the right mouse button with your joystick – if you need to access a pull-down menu while *MouseEm* is running, hold down the left Amiga key and right Alt key simultaneously to mimic the right mouse button. Clever, eh.
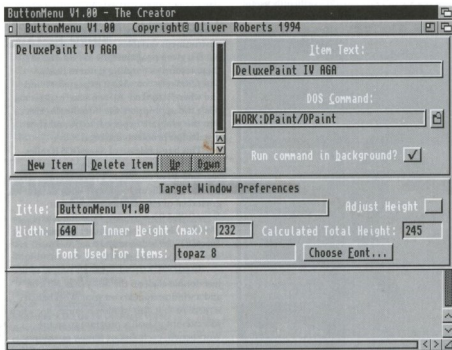
OCTAMED TUNE

Everyone knows that a great machine the Amiga is for creating music – what's more, you don't have to spend hundreds (and even thousands) of pounds on expensive MIDI synthesisers and samplers to bring your musical creations to life. All you need is a copy of *OctaMED* 5.01 from *AF62*'s Coverdisk and the music module on this month's Subscribers' Superdisk and you can realise your Amiga's musical talents in an instant!

```
ButtonMenu V1.00 - The Creator
ButtonMenu V1.00  Copyright© Oliver Roberts 1994

DeluxePaint IV AGA                    Item Text:
                                  DeluxePaint IV AGA
                                      DOS Command:
                                  WORK:DPaint/DPaint

New Item  Delete Item  Up  Down    Run command in background?  ✓

            Target Window Preferences
Title: ButtonMenu V1.00                    Adjust Height
Width: 640  Inner Height (max): 232  Calculated Total Height: 245
Font Used For Items: topaz 8    Choose Font...
```

Run your utilities simply by clicking on the appropriate button – life is simple with *ButtonMenu*.